

## CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 5 1. A method of synchronizing audible alarms and visual strobes comprising:  
connecting the audible alarms and visual strobes to common power lines;  
for each visual strobe, providing a capacitor carrying a charge to be  
discharged through the visual strobe and a charging circuit powered from the  
power lines to charge the capacitor to a firing voltage level that is maintained  
10 without activating the strobe;  
applying power to the audible alarms and visual strobes through the  
common power lines; and  
thereafter, changing the voltage on the power lines to control timing of  
the audible alarms and visual strobes, the strobes being triggered to flash with  
15 the change in voltage on the power lines.
2. The method of claim 1 wherein the change in voltage that triggers the strobes  
ends an audible alarm.
- 20 3. The method of claim 1 further comprising powering the visual strobes to charge  
the capacitor in each strobe; and wherein the step of changing the voltage on the  
power lines includes providing a synchronization signal through the power lines  
to cause each strobe to discharge the capacitor through a flash lamp in each  
strobe such that the strobes flash in synchronization with each other.
- 25 4. The method of claim 3 further comprising controlling timing of the strobes to  
provide an encoded visual output.

5. An alarm system comprising:  
a pair of power lines;  
at least one audible alarm powered by the power lines; and  
at least one visual strobe powered by the power lines, the strobe  
5 comprising:  
a capacitor for carrying a charge to be discharged through the  
strobe; and  
a charging circuit powered from the power lines to charge the  
capacitor to a firing voltage level that is maintained without activating  
10 the strobe, the strobe being triggered to flash with a change in the voltage  
on the power lines.
6. The alarm system of claim 5 wherein the audible alarm is non-continuous and  
synchronized.
- 15 7. The alarm system of claim 5 wherein the change in voltage that triggers the  
strobe ends an audible alarm.
8. The alarm system of claim 5 further comprising a plurality of audible alarms.
- 20 9. The alarm system of claim 8 wherein the change in voltage that triggers the  
strobe ends an audible beep produced by the audible alarms.
10. The alarm system of claim 5 wherein the change in voltage includes an  
25 interruption in power.

11. A method of synchronizing audible alarms and visual strobes comprising:
- connecting the audible alarms and visual strobes to common power lines and applying power to the audible alarms and visual strobes through the common power lines;
- 5                   at each strobe, charging a capacitor to a firing level that is maintained without activating the strobe; and
- after the audible alarms and visual strobes have been powered, repeatedly changing the voltage on the power lines to control timing of the audible alarms and visual strobes, the capacitors being discharged through the visual strobes.
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12. The method of claim 11 wherein a change in voltage that triggers the strobes ends an audible beep produced by the audible alarms.